

Festivities and Celebrations: Realities, myths and beyond

Firoz Mohammed

Since time immemorial, festivities and celebrations have been an essential part of our social and cultural existence. Festivals probably emanated from the amalgamation of the culture and religion of primitive tribes and as time passed by festivals besides becoming part of our psycho-social realities also became more diversified as a result of cultural advancements. Festivities and celebrations are not unique to one society. We humans across the globe spend countless precious hours in celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, religious festivals to create linkages and build communities.

The functional aspects of festivals and celebrations are praiseworthy and commendable. Festivities and celebrations join together different elements of society that are otherwise not directly connected by interpersonal channels of communication and interactions. Geographically separated culturally diverse groups share a sense of enhanced joy and happiness through festivals and celebrations. Thus, festivals bind communities together by bringing them together and enabling them to become an integral part of an enhanced shared experience. And this 'shared experience' and a 'sense of togetherness' and belongingness create a base for a vibrant, inclusive community and a nation.

As festivals are universal, celebrations reflect diverse shades of our socio-cultural realities. People express their faith in the divine; they express their joys and happiness, dancing, greeting, and hugging. And these celebrations do not remain confined to community neighbourhoods. Media transports these celebrations, which later becomes part of our extend-

ed cultural experience. In a Bollywood movie, Agneepath, the 'Deva Shree Ganesh' a tribute to Lord Ganesh through mesmerizing dance moves; the euphoria of the joyous festival, Ganesh Chaturthi travelled far beyond the streets of Mumbai into large celluloid screen.

There are some festivals which are also celebrated with mourning and tears. Shia Muslims across the world mourn the martyrdom of Hazrat Hussein and his family to respect their ultimate sacrifice. Dussehra and Ashura (the 10th day of Muharram) are the celebrated events which mark the victory of 'good' and the 'evil.'

And most importantly, in either case, such festivities and celebrations bring people together; and contribute to society becoming more inclusive and cohesive.

But lately, the real ethos of festivities and the celebrations are being eclipsed by two significant factors. Globalisation and consumerist culture have fragmented societies. Now it seems that the 'spiritual' part of the festival and celebrations are either diminishing or have lim-

ited or no significance. Who can 'spend more' and who can 'flaunt more' are the emerging norms during festivities and celebrations. The dirty display of wealth and power is killing the real essence of festivals and celebrations. The strong sense of 'spiritualism' to get closer to the 'divine' is being lost in the struggle to show 'my pandal is bigger, brighter and shinier than yours.'

The 'killer deals' accompanied by 'frenzied buying' and the way in which e-commerce marketers are luring customers for online shopping and sales are killing the entire spirit of festi-



Picture Courtesy: Atanu Majumdar

negative fallouts. Consumers plan purchases and companies go far ahead in terms of promotions and offers which at times leads to mindless buying and this works on a simple premise: it's a festive season, and so we must buy. The corporatised media for their own deep-rooted vested interests tries everything possible to pursue this agenda. Contemporary festivities

and celebrations are highly commercial and entertainment-driven. Consumerism in the name of celebrations is becoming the dominant culture. People do not realize that consumerism denies the essential simplicity of life ethos. The real happiness lies in our abilities to find joy and meaning in harmonious relationship with communities and nature.

The current competitive and aggressive politics in India besides impacting all spheres of our lives has also entered our religious and spiritual domains. Festivals and celebrations are becoming a significant platform to set political agendas and narratives. The world's most prominent religious festival India, the Kumbh Mela, where the spiritual message for the faithful is deep and profound, according to critics was used to set a political narrative. Religious identity politics which thrives on communal politics, vis-à-vis, divisive politics are exploiting outer manifestations of religion such as festivities and celebrations to the hilt. And this politics of 'vote-bank' is taking away the real essence of our festivals and celebrations. When Lord Shri Rama after fourteen years of exile returned to Ayodhya; the residents celebrated his return with lighted lamps with rows of 'diyas' (earthen clay pots) on the dark night of 'Amavasya.' The idea behind lighting of lamps signifies the 'spreading of light' and negate the darkness of negativity. Thus, the essence of festivities is to share, give, help, and celebrate to create communities of light and spread the message of unity and unconditional love towards one and all; and also absolute love of nature. We must go back to the basics of festivities and celebrations, that is, festivals must create an inclusive and cohesive society based on true spiritualism. And through festivals, we must celebrate humanity.

Long live "Kermis"

Debanjan Banerjee

“SOMETIMES you will never know the true value of A MOMENT until it becomes A MEMORY”

Three words but spelt and pronounced in different ways, Kermesse, or Kermis, or Kirmess. Basically these are Dutch language terms derived from 'kerk' (church) and 'mis' (mass) that became hired in English and French. The old history authenticate this is an anniversary of the foundation of a church (or the parish) and in honor of the patron. Such celebrations were regularly held in the Low Countries, in Central Europe and also in northern part of France, and were accompanied by feasting, dancing and sports of all kinds. The church ale was an English equivalent.

Debatably the primary Kermesse was an annual carnival to mark the events of the Brussels massacre of 1370 (some believes it happened in 1369) in the Belgium capita Brussels, when the whole Jewish population of the city were burnt alive or expelled after being accused of profaning a basket of communion hosts, which were said to have bled when stabbed. According to another source, those Jewish residents who could prove that they did not sacrilegious the hosts were not killed, but were merely banished from Brussels.

These festivities still in place in the form of fun-fairs, while the old allegorical representations are now uncommon. Whereas nearly every village has a kermis once or twice a year, the large Zuidfoor or Foire du Midi (South Fair) of Brussels and Sinksenfoor (Whitsun Fair) of Antwerp entice many visitors during several weeks.

The funfair on the Vrijdagmarkt in Ghent coincides with the 10-day long Gentse Feesten (Ghent Festivities) which are held across the entire inner city around the 21st of July (Belgian national holiday).



The standard Dutch language countenance Vlaamse kermis (Flemish kermesse) once referred to the native village kermesse (as pronounced in the former County of Flanders) though its modern custom is mainly limited to privately organized fairs open to the public, often for fund-raising, such as by schools or youth organizations in the Flemish Region.

The horde of the Dutch ship Gelderland used the names "griff-eendt" and "kermisgans" for

the dodo in 1598, in reference to fowl fattened for the Kermesse festival, which was held the day after they anchored on Mauritius.

Impact on other languages and cultures

The term Kermess is applied in the United States to any entertainment, especially one organized in the awareness of charity. The Dutch-American Village of Little Chute, Wisconsin celebrates Kermis annually since 1981. The Wallonian settlements in Door County, Wisconsin, also celebrate a "Kermis" with traditional Belgian dishes and events. Besides American polity that celebrates this holiday is La Kermesse of Biddeford, Maine.

In the City of Halifax (Nova Scotia, Canada), a city with a limited Dutch heritage, Kermesses have been held since 1907 as fundraisers for the local children's hospital. The École Française de Vancouver (ÉFIV) in North Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada), holds an annual Kermesse with games, food, a pétanque tournament and community participation.

The term has also had an immense influence on Ibero-American culture.

In the countries like Paraguay, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile, "Kermesses" are held by churches and schools to raise funds. In Lithuanian language "kermošius" (kermoshius) means a fair after the mass in the church. In Italian "kermesse" means party. In Romanian "chermeză" means party or banquet. In the Turkish language "kermes" is a sale of ladies'

handiwork for charity.

As such there is no such festival in this sub-continent specifically in India comes in the nomenclature of "Kermis" or "Kermesse" but on the contrary, this land is made for hundreds and thousands of Kermesses. So many religion, caste, creed, community, ethnicity lead to multifaceted, multi-dimensional carnivals throughout the year. Indeed, these carnivals do play the role of an apt catalyst of integration, brotherhood, livelihood and above all the spirited cycle of life altogether.

Long live "Kermis"



Not your Everyday Deity

Very often in Indian households, when a girl is praised, she is compared to Goddess Laxmi having ideal qualities or 'Sarv Gun Sampyan'. Newlywed brides are labelled as 'Ghar ki Laxmi' - a metaphor, which may be linked to the element of dowry associated with marriage. How often would you find her compared to the rustic and fierce Goddess Kali? The answer lies at the very root of the ideals that have shaped Indian society for centuries. Not one of your regular deities, Kali is summoned only when there is extreme annihilation in the Universe. She has a raging persona, devoid of inhibitions and affections commonly related to the ideal Indian woman.

Analysis of Indian literature reveals that the history of Goddess Kali dates back to 2500 BCE, during the Indus Valley civilization. She is identified as a dark-skinned woman, scantily clad in animal skin, holding up an aggressive posture. Adorned with skulls and sharp weapons, she does not come as a symbol of goodness. In the southern regions of the country she is even seen as a symbol of human discomfort.

All women, at some point, envision within themselves a divine feminine. However few perceive themselves as the angry goddess. Commonly pictured as a frightening figure wearing a garland of severed heads, Kali shatters the conventional assuring image of other female divinities. Much like the indomitable women of today, she does not adhere to the societal rules. She, in her frenzy of wiping out the evil, steps on her husband Lord Shiva who is the most powerful celestial being of the Hindu belief system. Upholders of patriarchy state that the Goddess bit her tongue out of embarrassment. Here the tongue, an icon of power smeared with the blood of demons is converted into a symbol of shame. Much like the Goddess, women who defy patriarchal norms are compelled to feel guilty about their actions. They are portrayed as disorderly women who do not make good wives or caring mothers.



Picture source: Artstation

During the seventeenth century, poets of Bengal among others attempted to turn the fierce Goddess into a caring, feminine force with much focus on her nurturing characteristics. They made her domestic in appearance, adding ornaments on her and changing her skin colour to a calm blue. However contemporary feminists see this as an intentional move to pacify the staunch orthodox segment of the society who felt threatened by such a dominating woman. Women are expected to calm their male counterparts

and prevent them from going down the path of rebellion. They are to absorb all kinds of annoyance and irritation into themselves. However, in the case of the Goddess, it is Shiva who has to pacify her all destructive rage. Such instance of a divine being is not always considered ideal for women to follow. Hence, these stories are given different interpretations to misguide the masses, essentially women from taking the road to freedom from chains of patriarchy.

Therefore too much inspiration from such an unorthodox deity might alter the balance of power in society. That is why perhaps Kali is stereotyped as a symbol of death and destruction. However this eternal entity is much more than just aggression. While most people call her the annihilator of all things evil, she is also a fierce Mother, protecting her children from adversities. In fact, according to modern-day feminism, she may even be an icon of female liberation. With the ongoing issues of gender in-

equality in most sections of the society, one should look beyond the ordinary and embrace the unshackling traits of Kali. Hence for all the undaunted souls out there who are searching for an opportunity to break free, it might be high time to include the unconventional Kali on your wall for the divine.

Rapti Mukherjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

The Diwali Connection



Picture source: Pinterest

For the large community of Non-Resident Indians living in various countries like USA, UK and UAE, the festival of Diwali is a way to connect with their traditions and the Indian roots.

To the Indians working in San Jose or Cupertino, (which are considered to be the hubs of the Indian community in California), Diwali calls for a way to connect with fellow countrymen. Since Diwali is mostly a working day in USA, festivities are organised when people return home in the evening.

Thanks to globalisation, people based outside India generally do not find it difficult to follow traditions like distrib-

uting Indian sweets and lighting diyas (earthen lamps). With whatever resources available, people try to make their Diwali celebrations as lively and as possible, like masses back home do. Since several cities in the States are now home to a large number of Indian communities, there are many temples where people can offer prayers during Diwali.

Similarly, in Wembley, London, there is a large Indian community which is dominated by the Gujaratis and celebrate this festival of lights in the grandest manner. Surely, abroad does not provide one with the luxury of bursting a number of crackers throughout the night, but people here do burst a sparkler or two, to keep in line with the customs.

In Dubai, which has a thriving Indian population, the community living there is able to celebrate the festival in style. A big event is being planned at Dubai creek which is one of the most happening places in Dubai. The whole of Indian Consulate in Dubai, along with Dubai authorities will be celebrating Diwali. There will be bursting of firecrackers, lighting up of LED lights and many other events.

Surely, the celebrations abroad are no match for the celebrations in India. But for thousands and thousands of Indians settled abroad, the festival of lights is a way to revisit their cultural and religious heritage.

Ayan Chatterjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

Migration of Tribals

This study concentrates on the influence of modern values and institutions in the day to day life of the tribal migrants. The different varieties of tribes used to migrate towards tea-gardens and other places of work since ages. But in recent years, the volume of such migration has intensified due to growing socio-economic hardships of members of this marginalised community. Today, the tribes migrate to various industrial and agriculturally rich areas with the sole idea of sustenance of the change in their livelihood. Thus, there is a change in the social, economic and cultural life of the tribes due to migration.

We attempt to identify the areas of changes in the life and culture of migrants. Interestingly, respondents acknowledging the impact of migration have asserted that it is difficult for them to sustain the age-old belief and practice in society today. On the other hand, these migrants have realised that the process of migration has helped them to fight starvation and various economic problems. Even it has directly influenced them to accept certain aspects of Bengali culture at Bankura and Hooghly districts of West Bengal leading to deteriorating traditional culture.

It is clear that migration has several direct and indirect impacts on the traditional culture, social norms and tradition of their particular tribal caste. The impact is evident in their day to day activities. The process of migration has helped them to learn about the new method of agriculture, cooking style, and food habits, the various languages, dress pattern, getting accustomed to readymade clothes, aware of political mobilisations, learn habit of savings etc. Through the seasonal migration, the migrants could learn about other needs of migration i.e., the need of education for their children, get exposure to modern health practices and could doubt superstitious practices like witch-craft, sorcery performances by the 'priests' and 'Ojhas'.



Picture source: Pinterest

Recently I've come across to these people in one of the brick kilns and got to know about them, their way of living life, their work, their lifestyles, their daily routine and most importantly their reason for migration from their villages. There are around 100 to 120 migrants who come to this brick kilns every year and at the end of the working season they travel back to their villages. They are brought here by "Thikedars", who divide them into groups and allow them to different organisations. They are given all the basic needs that they need for living. They are paid on weekly basis, and as compared to their village they earn here more for sustaining life. They are even provided with clothing by the municipal corporation. But, the government should take some more steps to provide them a better life free from poverty. There are people coming to various brick kilns from the outskirts of Bihar and Patna especially from Gaya, Newada, Lakhisarai, Lalunagar, Barbariya, Barbigha since a long time for about 20 to 22 years. They work here as fireman, moulders and daily-wage workers like carrying the bricks arranging them. They earn here more as compared to their village. They get all kinds of help like medical help, water supply, electricity, equipment for making food. The Municipal Corporation of that particular area also helps them by distributing clothes and other basic needs. They also arrange for mass lunch.

With the growing development and change in our society, these people have started to send their children to schools and colleges, where they are treated with equal love and respect. The children are provided with all sorts of help like medical help, schooling and even entertainment. They are provided with houses for each family within the brick kilns to stay. But there are many children who even work with their parents to lead a sustainable life. After having a good conversation with them, when they were asked whether they would continue in this profession or not? They very happily said that they will continue here to live and earn and also because they get the privilege of getting their daughters and sons educated free of cost, which will in future help them to overcome poverty and lead a good life.

Snighdha Bakshi, PG Media, 1st Year

Euthanasia

Choice of life or death?

When does life become so unbearable that you want to give up

Those who have taken occasional trips to the hospitals to visit their relatives or friends, know one thing for sure that it is quite normal for people to bond with others who are visiting their relatives or friends as well. It's natural because you resonate with the battles and the struggles they go through. Something like shared pain and misery. On one such visit of mine, where I went to see an uncle, I came across an elderly woman whose husband had been admitted here for a very long time. When it was time for him to sit back and enjoy his second innings of life as a retired officer, he was stuck between life and death, mostly on the side of death though. Doctors gave up on him months ago but his wife was bent on keeping him alive through life support. Tears welled up in her eyes when expressed how gradually he has reduced from a beautiful man to just bones and skin. She also told me how the hollow eyes of her husband accused her of keeping him alive without his will and that they begged for death. Ultimately she will have to make a choice - life in worst conditions or death that gives relief?

This choice is what makes Euthanasia so complicated, yet so simple! Whether we dispense mercy to those who don't want to live anymore and where death seems more alluring than precious life or keeping the incurable forcefully bound to Earth. Hope is a good thing, but sometimes it is better to let it go. We must muster the courage to bid them farewell, to be brave enough to set them free from life, when it becomes a burden.

Manjari Ray, PG Media, 2nd Year

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Prolific. Victorious. Sindhu

The day was near, and it was meant to be. PV Sindhu's triumph on the global stage was just a matter of time, and August 25 marked the day when she went on to etch her name in the nation's sporting history. In a little more than half an hour (37 minutes), Pusarla Venkata Sindhu became the first-ever Indian shuttler to win a gold at the BWF World Championship in Switzerland, by defeating Japan's Nozomi Okuhara. To state that Sindhu merely defeated her opponent will be an understatement, as the latter was no match for Sindhu's prowess and the scoreboard which read 21-7, 21-7; was a testament of a dominating performance by the 24-year-old. She didn't let her guards down for even a second, channelling her aggression to play shots and move around the court, and subsequently demolish her opponent.

Not many have forgotten the BWF World Championship final in 2017 when Sindhu suffered a heart-wrenching loss against the same opponent. The new world number 3 Okuhara, known for her speed and endurance, beat the current fifth-seeded Sindhu in an epic 110 minutes long clash. But this year, Sindhu buried her demons of the past to produce a demolishing performance. Without any doubt, PV Sindhu is the face of Indian badminton, but this hasn't stopped her from receiving criticism-particularly for losing hold in tournament finals. In fact, it took her six BWF appearances to win her first gold, after winning two bronze in 2013 and 2014, and two silver medals in 2017 and 2018.

However, the lanky shuttler from Hyderabad has never stopped anything from getting in her way. Although she has been called out for her inability to win gold in finals, Sindhu has a reputation of stepping up her game on the big stage. PV Sindhu wasn't in the best of form, coming into the world championship this year. In the quarter-final against Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying, Sindhu was trailing by 12-21 after the first set, and it appeared as if she was set for a pre-mature exit. However, she fought back to win the next two sets by 23-21, 21-19 and there was no looking back. In the semi-finals, she defeated second-seeded Chen Yufei from China in straight sets of 21-7, 21-14. Consequently, the Padma Shri winner has successfully maintained a 100% record against Chinese shuttlers in world championships. With her win, PV Sindhu has become the second woman after former Olympics and world champion Zhang Ning of China to win the most number of medals at World Championship.

A lot of credit for Sindhu's turnaround should go to her coach Pullela Gopichand. In fact, it was Gopichand's success that inspired Sindhu to take up badminton as a profession. The chief national coach of the Indian badminton team was always impressed by Sindhu's never-say-die spirit, and it is under his guidance that Sindhu went on to become India's most successful badminton player. Kim Ji Hyun,

the country's foreign coach also put in a lot of effort to train the Olympic silver medalist, with special focus on the world championship and the upcoming Olympic games. Sindhu went through rigorous training to sharpen her skills and improve physical fitness and endurance. Without any doubt, PV Sindhu is the face of change in a cricket-obsessed country which is an established fact. In 2017, a report published by the Economic Times said that PV Sindhu was second only to Indian captain Virat Kohli in terms of earnings from endorsements. In February 2019, she signed a four-year sports sponsorship deal of \$7.2 million with Chinese sports brand Li Ning, making it one of the big-

gest in world Badminton. With total earnings of \$5.5 million (ranked 13th in the list), she is the lone athlete from the country to be named in Forbes' 15 highest-paid female athletes in the world.

The BWF World Championship is a huge boost to India's hopes from PV Sindhu at the forthcoming Tokyo Olympics next year. As Sindhu finds a rejuvenated self at the big stage, fans and admirers around the globe wait for India's maiden Olympic gold at a badminton singles event.

Purbasha Pal, PG Media, 2nd Year

Record-Breaking Sindhu!

Here is a quick look at her accolades and achievements over the years.

2009- bronze medal at Sub-Junior Asian Badminton Championship

2012- winner of Asian Youth Under 19 Championship

2013- first Grand-Prix gold by winning Malaysian title; becoming India's first medallist in women's singles at world championship; won Macau Open Grand Prix gold and bestowed with the prestigious Ar-



Picture Source: Getty

juna Award for badminton.

2014- first Indian to win two back-to-back medals in the BWF World Badminton Championships after her bronze medal finish.

2015- won her third successive women's singles title with the Macau Open Grand Prix Gold; awarded with the Padma Shri award, India's fourth-highest civilian award.

2016- won the Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold women's singles title; made history by becoming the youngest and first female individual to bag an Olympic Silver medal representing India; won the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award.

2017- won Indian Open Superseries; won silver at BWF World Championship; runner up at Dubai world superseries final

2018- won gold for mixed doubles in Commonwealth games, silver in the Singles event, silver in world championship, first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals tournament; clinched a historic silver medal in Women's Singles Badminton event to become the first Indian to finish second on the podium in the Asian Games.

Bleak in the Festival of Illumination

Diwali has been a festival elucidating fear since childhood days. Although friends in the locality would enjoy burning firecrackers of variants, the wreath of smoke would choke one and all. Diwali since time immemorial trumpets the victory of Lord Krishna over Narakusara and the day before Diwali is often celebrated as Naraka Chaturdasi. Such mythological anecdotes have always enriched the essence of festivals and our childhoods. My grandmother used to narrate these tales to me. Our generation has been lucky to savour the essence of such festivals with an elucidation of the myths and sagas.

Gradually as the years passed, Diwali has come to be known less as the festival of lights and more as the festival of air and sound pollution. No wonder every year it makes a big hole in our pockets and turns the Chinese Market in Calcutta a hub of thriving commerce. The local vendors who make earthen lamps also suffer from our consumerism, as we choose to buy glinting rice lights over aesthetic diyas. And it is based on such consumerist choices of ours that poor children from several parts of India continue to be employed in the firecracker-manufacturing business; one such being the Sivakasi Firecrackers factory. The higher the use of firecrackers, the higher is the employment of these vulnerable children who also often lose their lives as it is a hazardous profession. The corporatized media does not pay heed;

nor do the ordinary people around us (young and old alike) who go about merrymaking all night long on Diwali.

For us, Kali puja is the equivalent of Diwali in the eastern part of India, which is held on the night of the New Moon in the Bengali month of Kartik. She is not only an embodiment of Shakti but also Tantrism or Indian black magic. The main purpose of kali puja is to seek the help of the goddess in destroying evil—both in the outside world and within us. The rituals of the puja ought to be very simple but we end up preparing elaborate meals, mostly puritanical, as "bhog" for the goddess when in mythology Kali is said to have consumed som ras or wine. Kali was always an aboriginal goddess, earliest to have been worshipped by the Austric tribals. Much later she was incorporated into the Brahminical pantheon.

As with Diwali and every other religious festival, we mostly obsess over rituals and use such occasions to make a dirty display of wealth and power rather than spiritual exploration. What gets lost is a basic human essence.

Priyadarshini Mukherjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

“ The more pictures you see, the better you are as a photographer. ”



1. Souravdeep Dalal, UG Media, 2nd Year
2. Abhijit Dhar, UG Media, 2nd Year
3. Pallavi Laha, PG Media, 1st Year
4. Abhijit Dhar, UG Media, 2nd Year
5. Souravdeep Dalal, UG Media, 2nd Year
6. Atanu Majumdar, UG Media, 2nd Year
7. Anubhab Chaudhary, UG Media, 2nd Year
8. Tirthankar Das, UG Media, Final Year



Rock music is dying and the Millennials don't have a clue

Music is everywhere, one only needs to have the ear for it. Coming to rock music, people who were born in the period between the 50s and 80s have witnessed a lot of changes in the genre. The changes were prevalent and have left several marks in the history of rock and roll. No sooner than the late 2000s, things started taking a different turn only to smother the existence of energetic tracks with powerful vocals, pumped up drums and distorted guitars. The millennials might have other views but one question remains unanswered; why don't we see another Kurt Kobain, Freddie Mercury, Jimi Hendrix or Bruce Springsteen in this era?

One of the most commonly found explanations for the change in rock music is time and generation. People say the time has led to the emergence of newer genres that have slowly minimized the impact of rock music on listeners. Others say it is about the generation and the millennials do not know what real music is. Perhaps both the statements are relevant. According to a survey done in the United States, the sale of rock records has declined drastically over the years and only 14% of the US population is listening to rock and its subgenres in 2019.

As the grunge legend, Kurt Kobain said, "the duty of youth is to challenge corruption" and that is where it all began. The birth of rock and its subgenres had everything to do with rebellion, protest and not giving in to the challenges in life. The fans used to believe in the particular genre and had a different philosophy towards life making rock and roll something more than just music, they said that rock is a religion to them.

Cut to 2010, the scene started looking a bit different. Many record companies fell to the prey of bankruptcy, sale of records declined, musicians started working and publishing their music independently, and the major change was the emergence of electronic music.

Pop, Hip hop, EDM, Trance, etc., took the world by storm and the youth started relating themselves with the genres. Change is inevi-

table and it is the only constant thing but Rock didn't deserve to die. The powerful lyrics that could drive thousands of people in a positive direction is no longer effective. The millennials don't care about what 'Stairway to Heaven' or 'Comfortably Numb' or 'Purple Rain' conveyed; they are only interested in dancing to electronic music.

In an interview, Dave Grohl, the former drummer of Nirvana and the frontman of Foo Fighters expressed his concern on the state of present-day music in the US. He said, "pop music in America right now is so superficial". He is absolutely disappointed by the blooming musicians and their inability to write good music. Grohl added on pop music, "It's fun to listen to, to turn up in your car when you're in traffic, but there's no substance at all. It's devoid of any meaning. I'm not just saying that as a 45-year-old rock musician, I'm saying that as a human being. If the Number One song is about your butt, that's a problem."

Is it worth listening to modern-day music? Well,

that is a completely different topic but rock music is not the same anymore. Even the greatest bands of all time are releasing new albums that lack the essence of pure rock. They call it post-rock and incorporate electronic samples which is absolutely disturbing to rock lovers.

From an artist's perspective, the world is demanding change and in order to be in the charts, the compositions need modern touch. On the other hand, the listeners do not have any clue what real rock is. The millennials won't go back in time and buy a Led Zeppelin record, they would rather stream a trance track on Spotify and dance to the beat.

As the adage goes 'Old is Gold', changes have affected every art form, be it music, cinema or anything else. The concern is, will the youth ever know what rock music is all about? Rock is extremely powerful, it can cure pain and give strength. Alas! The millennials don't have a clue.

Nirmalaya Banerjee, PG Media, 1st Year



Picture source: Google images

India Turns to Electric Vehicles to Beat Pollution

The Union Budget has announced a bold move to make a transition to electric vehicles and offered a tax incentive for the early adopters. Its stated vision to leapfrog into an era of electric mobility and domestic vehicle manufacturing, led by public transport and commercial vehicles, is forward-looking. It is also inevitable because poor air quality and noise pollution have sharply affected the quality of life, and pose a serious public health challenge.

As the NITI Aayog has stated, the goal of shifting to electric vehicles cannot make progress without deadlines, and a market-driven approach sought by some sections of the automotive industry will leave India's capabilities and infrastructure for e-mobility trailing others, notably China. With 2030 as the outer limit, the imperative is to fix a realistic time-frame by which scooters, motorcycles, three-wheel carriages and later, all newly manufactured vehicles will be battery powered. An additional income tax deduction of ₹1.5 lakh is now being offered on interest paid on loans to purchase electric vehicles, and the GST Council has been moved to cut the tax on e-vehicles to 5% from 12%.

Both demands were made by the industry ear-



Picture source: Tata Power

lier. There is a significant outlay under the second iteration of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing (of Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles (FAME) plan of ₹10,000 crore, to give a fillip to commercial vehicles and to set up charging stations.

The budgetary measures will have an immediate impact on the pricing of electric vehicles and bring in more models, but it will take a sustained effort by the Centre, in partnership with State governments, to enable a fast rollout of charging infrastructure. The Ministry of Power

issued guidelines and standards for this in December last year, setting technical parameters for public charging stations that can enable normal and fast charging.

With price competition, a speedy spread of electric two-wheelers can be expected, given that over 80% of conventional vehicles sold in India come under that category. Affordable charging will make these vehicles and commercial three-wheelers attractive because operating costs are a fraction of petrol and diesel equivalents. Yet, longer range travel will require more than a charge-at-home facility, and this would have to be in the form of fast charging at parking lots, retrofitted fuel outlets, new public charging stations, hotels, offices and so on. Swapping the battery at convenient locations with one that is pre-charged, especially for commercial vehicles that run longer and need a quick turnaround, is worth considering. A longer-term policy priority has to be the setting up of lithium battery production and solar charging infrastructure of a scale that matches the ambition. The Centre has accepted some of the demands of the auto industry to popularize EVs.

Kaustav Mazumdar, PG Media, 1st Year

Artist's Block

"MY HEAD WAS FULL OF WORDS, YET THE SHEETS ARE NOT SCRATCHED BY THE INDIGO STREAKS. I FAILED THIS NIGHT."

"MY MIND SEEKS THE COLOR TONIGHT, YET THE CANVAS STARES AT ME VACANT LIKE SOME PROMISES UNFULFILLED. I WATCH IN HORROR AS MY WORLD CRASHES IN FRONT OF ME."

"THE MOMENT WAS THERE, I WAS NOT. IT EXPIRED. WHAT REMAINS IS AN EMPTY FAÇADE OF REALITY OF MY ABILITY TO LOWER MYSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN."

Whose words are we looking here? Whose thoughts are we diving into and seeking out words draped in grey? These are the words of the ones who dare to dream, who dare to leap amidst chaos and take out a sector of serenity and serve it to the world. The ARTIST who doesn't necessarily do different things but does things differently. But then one must put forward this question as to what was the purpose of these statements? If they are the driving force of imagina-



Picture source: Google

tive theory of the world then why the same people are contradicting the basic theorems?

Well, the answer lies within the skeletal framework of two words "ARTISTS BLOCK".

To an ordinary person it might not ring the alarm bell of consolation, but for the ones who face it and dread it they know

h o w m u c h agony and pain and disappointment hides beneath it.

It's a phase where the need to produce new projects increases exponentially while the productive output decreases

and dissatisfaction take over for the most part of time, space and sinews.

For an artist, art is the only way to analyze, adapt and express the inner feelings. When the only way to do so is hampered it takes a significant toll upon them. The expectations from self shatter down the inner capabilities and a feeling of hopelessness prevails all over.

When the neighbourhood sleeps, a sole compartment stays up, the light of faded yellow tearing through the glistening black of the cityscape, feeble enough not to make his presence among the chaotic aberrations of time, and while everyone peacefully sleeps, holding onto the fear, he weeps.

Pallavi Laha, PG Media, 1st Year



Sacred Games Season 2 Review: Disappointment or a piece of gem?



Picture source: Google

giving us deep insights into characters and plots, the other might look at the prolonged narrative, monotonous.

'Guruji', played by established actor Pankaj Tripathi, now has quite an impressive battalion of following, post his extraordinary execution of the said role.

Analogous with the first season, the story revolves around the life story of 'Ganesh Gaitonde', played by veteran actor Nawazuddin Siddique, while formidably

prancing around with timelines through the central storyline of Inspector Sartaj Singh and his bid to save the city from an imminent apocalyptic event.

The gem created by Anurag Kashyap and Vikram Motwane smartly refer to the epics from Hinduism, thoughts provoked by the controversial Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho), and also throws light on the ongoing issue of lynching in the country.

Other positives from the season include antagonist, Shahid Khan (played by Ranveer Shourie) and his storyline connecting with the protagonist from the story.

Kalki Koechlin, who plays the role of Guruji's disciple Batya Abelman, did a half-decent job herself.

The surprise factor from the season comes from Suvreen Chawla, who plays on a dark, intriguing character while portraying Jojo Mascarenhas. Her narrative will help viewers to look at her as a layered artist henceforth, unlike the clichéd roles she played in commercial movies previously.

Recurring characters Zoya Mirza, Malcolm Mourad, Bipin Bhosale, and DCP Parulkar remain in the periphery of all the action throughout the narrative.

However, the increased airtime for the new characters and their development comes at the expense of the old ones. Kanta Bai and Bunty only appear in cameos, leaving the audience in splits.

The only undesired comedy scene appears right at the climax when one of the analysts wears a bulletproof vest while detonating a nuclear bomb, trying to hack into the system by drawing 'Z' pattern, much like a smartphone.

The sequel finally explains the involvement

of Trivedi and father of Sartaj Singh; and their cumulative nexus monitored by their ringleader, Guruji.

Anurag Kashyap delivers his directorial magic in some of the scenes involving hallucinogens, coupled with extraordinary improv from the dynamic duo of Nawazuddin Siddique and Pankaj Tripathi.

Viewers shall also witness picturesque views of Kenya and South Africa. The series may be divided into two halves. The first four episodes build-up for the subsequent action in the latter half of the series. Sensational writing from Varun Grover engages the audience until its last breath.

Overall, the season lives up to its prolonged build-up and its network of character development.

Unlike other Indian series on Netflix, Sacred Games Season 2 does not taper off in the end, instead, keeps the viewers hanging for the next season.

One can only help but wait for the next update from the already established franchise. Bookworms claim that there is more than what meets the eye. Readers of Vikram Chandra's novel have claimed that there still is a room for a third season. Fingers Crossed.

Shubro Mukherjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

A Tete-e-Tete with the prodigy Rhythm Shaw

It is said that you see the signs when they are young. And that's what exactly happened with Rhythm Shaw from Kolkata. 23-year-old Ridu as he is popularly known among friends and family has performed and worked with the best musicians in India and abroad. Having already worked with stalwarts like AR Rahman, Ranjit Barot, Peter Finger, Clive Carroll, Thomas Leeb, John Lunn, he started out at a very young age under the able guidance of his father, the legendary Nepal Shaw who has worked with the great RD Burman. Rhythm tells us about his journey so far.

How did music happen in your life?

It wasn't a very difficult decision for me to make because I belonged from a family which had music in its core. From early childhood, my dad knew that I would be a musician, therefore my name 'Rhythm'. So right from the time I had consciousness about my existence, I was already strumming my small guitar before I started understanding anything else. I remember once my dad (Nepal Shaw) was composing something and me, being a little kiddo I took the small 'ukulele' kind of instrument along with a drawing book and sat beside my dad scratching, scribbling trying to write music. I feel that it all started there.

You were introduced on stage by your father who is a legend in himself. Tell us about your first performance with him.

I don't think anyone can be a better guide than my dad. The way he guided me, he didn't let me perform a lot but he made sure that I got the right opportunities, grabbed them and flourished. I am not sure how much I have flourished, but I am happy to have reached where I am now. I performed for the first time with my dad at a hall named Rangana Theatre, the unusual thing being I was playing the tabla and my dad played the acoustic guitar. It was a very dicey situation thinking about which instrument to take up for my career. Both of the instruments were close and dear to me and making the decision to choose one was really tough.

How different is the music scene in Mumbai in comparison to Kolkata?

Mumbai being the hub of Bollywood, runs very well because of the commercial Bollywood music. Honestly, I will say Kolkata has some of the most amazing musicians when compared to the rest of India. At times it is the sheer number of musicians, who dedicatedly practice the art. Kolkata being a culturally rich place, music literally flows within you. Of course there are other great cities in Northeast and cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, which have great musicians,



Picture courtesy: Rhythm Shaw

but Kolkata significantly has been a more popular cultural hub. The only problem with Kolkata is a lack of proper system of distribution of remuneration, whereas Mumbai has more regularity in a number of gigs which are at the same time economically rewarding. This is one of the basic reasons why more number of people tend to come to Mumbai. That being said, I am still a *Kolkata-r Bangali* and a true *Mumbaikar* at the same time.

How does it feel being a youth icon and representing India at different music festivals worldwide?

It feels really great and I am honoured to get the opportunity to represent India. I feel really happy that I have been chosen to do so by people who had their trust in me, who thought that I had it in me to present myself in front of the world. But then again, it took some while for this to happen. Hours of practice, constant dedication and focus have helped me through. That's what I would like to share with everyone,

do not lose hope. There are always good times and bad times, but you got to fight throughout. Even in the good times, do not stop practising thinking yourself to be great. Instead, don't think that you are great and keep on doing what you love. This is something I have been taught by my parents from a very young age.

Which has been your most memorable performance outside India till date?

It is really difficult to say because I have lost count of the number of gigs I have performed. Outside India, if there's one place I love performing would be in Germany. I have performed in 28 concerts in 28 days in Germany for the International Guitar Night Festival which I was a part of in 2016 and 2017. I came up with my album *Opening Act* in 2015, which was a huge success. It felt great expressing your emotions and playing your own music to an international audience. They appreciated it so much that they came back asking for the second album which I am currently working on.

Finally, how did AR Rahman happen and what exactly did it feel like?

Mohini Dey and I have been very good friends for a really long time. She showed some of my videos to Ranjit uncle who really liked it and gave me a call. I was asked to come over for a recording. He gave me a second call and asked me whether I would like to play with Rehman sir. It all happened in a jiffy and it felt really out of the world. Everyone around got a little excited and the rest is almost like history.

How was it releasing your first album outside India? Does it increase expectations when you go out of your homeland?

It's not necessarily that way. You always have to give your best to impress your audience and that's what exactly happened. I was really happy to see the reaction from the other side of the world, where guitar owes much of its origin to.

It was a great moment for me sharing the stage with international artists. I got a chance to interact and perform with stalwarts like Peter Finger, Clive Carroll, Thomas Leeb, John Lunn.

You are so young and occupied, what keeps you going and motivated?

My life, in general, keeps me motivated. I like to take motivation from things around me. I used to watch Moto GP, biking and stunts interest me. I admired Valentino Rossi and watching his videos motivated me greatly and brought a smile on my face. They inspired me so much that I almost became a junkie in terms of practice. The passion is such that at times there is no sleep and rest but my mind keeps focused and calm. I always keep thinking about new ideas and upcoming projects. The mind plays an active part in your growth. You need to build your own self so that you can climb up. Knowing myself better not only helps me get better in music but also as a human being. As I go around the world meeting people, learning different cultures and making music is such an amazing feeling. I am playing the guitar because I love to and while doing that I get to earn money, meet new people and also travel the world.

Nowadays when most parents discourage extracurricular activities, how was the situation at your home?

It was just the opposite at my place. My friends were always envious of me having such amazing parents who always supported me. My dad and mom being musicians themselves were always supportive. But then again at times, it was difficult. I didn't have many friends and did not go out much and the focus was more on building a career.

Anurag Ghosh, PG Media, 2nd year

POETS CORNER

Wise Knocks

Shiny Kar, UG Media, 3rd year

For a life, I was sure, those words were genuine,
Smile that caressed souls, eyes sanguine...

But, life you see, has upgraded itself to difficult levels,
Deceiving you with serpents behind honey smothered fables.

All spiced up chiseled words, curtained at their best,
Ready to hammer you, right there, right at your weakest.

Thus unveils the fantasies carved within reality,
Innocent swears, shameless laughs, uncalled sympathy...

For all that's into existence is a mirage of love,
Winged hearts, dimmed smiles, but hey, that isn't enough!

Tortured, silent cries, submersed under noisy lanes,
Hopes evaporated and trust smashed to grains...

But yeah, life goes on with its million plays staged,

The serpent wrapped in a new skin, the victim trapped and caged.

For a life, I thought those words were genuine,
But now I know, that smile bred poison, eyes sanguine.

এবে এক কঠিন সত্য

সায়দী বানার্জি, পিজি মিডিয়া সাইন্স, সেকেন্ড ইয়ার

এখন ২০১৯ ...

ভেবে দেখুন তো সকলে, পৃথিবী খুব সুত বদলেযাচ্ছে !!

এবে এক কঠিন সত্য,

অমরাও চলেছি যে ধ্বংসের পথে !!

কিন্তু কেন?

নেই যে কোনো উত্তর.. থাকবেই বা কি ভাবে !!

অমাদের কি সত্যি আছে কোনো চিন্তা?

অথচ এই অমরাই পৃথিবীকে ধ্বংসের পথে অগ্রসর হতে সাহায্য করছি!!

কি ভাই নাহ??

হয়তো সকলেরই অবাচ্য মনের ফাঁক দিয়ে এই কঠিন সত্যটি মাথা তুলে দাঁড়াচ্ছে !!

কিন্তু কেউ কি তা খেয়াল রাখে ??

বর্তমানে বেড়ে গিয়েছে এত হিংসা, এত প্রতিহিংসা, এত লোক, এত লাগস,

ভাই তো বেড়ে গিয়েছে বিলাসিতার প্রবণতাও !!

গাড়ি ছাড়া মানুষ এখন চলতে পারেনা, স্মার্টফোন মানুষ এখন থাকতে পারেনা,

কিন্তু তারা কি বোঝেনা?

দূষণের অত্যধিক মাত্রা ঘর ফলে নেই কোনো হাড়কাঁপনি শীত, নেই কোনো অঝোর বৃষ্টি!!

ভুগতে কিন্তু হচ্ছে সেই অমাদেরই,

মায়ের লোকসনে মলা বন্দি.

অবার জাতে অসুবিধা সেই অমাদেরই

ভাই এই যে অরও একটা কঠিন সত্য-

প্রাকৃতিক গাছের জীবন নিলে আমাদেরও যে আমাদের জীবনটা প্রকৃতির হাতে বিলাসন দিতে হবে.

কি ভাই না ??

আত্মদর্শন

হস্তিকা পাল, পিজি মিডিয়া, সেকেন্ড ইয়ার

স্বপ্নের গায়ে আঁচড় লেগেছে

পৃথিবী মেরেছে চড়

বুকের হুতাশ বাড়তে বাড়তে

চোখে জমে পরপর

এরপর সেই অকাল শ্রাবণ

স্বাভাসলিলে ডোবা

বলার তে ছিলো অনেক কিছুই

সময় করেছে বোবা

Farewell

Saptadyuti Kar, PG Media, 2nd Year

With oceans in my eyes and thunders in my heart, I bid
you adieu my home sweet home...

Oh!my roots!

Let me forever endure the ache of parting

Enwrap me not in your blanket of affection, For I must
leave,

The belligerent world awaits me!

The chords of nostalgia will strike from time to time
The pages of indelible memory will be turned over and
over

Our memory lane will forever be guarded by lights

Lane, where no dust will rest,

Only fond memories for recollection.

On a weary day, on a cloudy night

When fog and mist surrounds my mind

I will visit the lane

Craving some solace.

Oh!my roots!

Let me behold you for one last time,

Let my eyes witness your charm for one last time

For I must take your leave

For a journey unknown

The hostile world awaits me.

আমার শহর

পূরী চ্যাটার্জী, পিজি মিডিয়া সাইন্স, সেকেন্ড ইয়ার

সকালে ব্যস্ততার ফলে যেই শহরটার খোঁজ পাই না

বিকলে বাড়ি ফেরার পথে প্রত্যেক গলি, রাস্তায় খোঁজ পাই শহরটার।

কখনো ধরো বাসের কোনের সিটে বোসে থাকা ছেলেটার মোবাইলের আলো এ

চকচকে মুখটা স্লোগান দেয় "হাল ছাড়িনি বস, স্বপ্ন দেখাটা চালিয়ে যাচ্ছি"

কিংবা সেই ক্লান্ত কাঁধগুলো যে গুলো ব্যাগের ভারতে স্বপ্ন দেখেনো নিকোটিনের
নেশায় মত্ত।

ক্লান্ত চোখ, আরামহীন শরীর যে গুলো স্বপ্ন দেখতেও ক্লান্ত।

যেন দাস প্রথার শেষ এখনো ঘটেনি।

লোকের জন্য বাঁচা।

আবার ধরো শ্যাম বাজারের মোড়ে দাঁড়ানো একটা মেয়ের সেই তৃষ্ণাক্ত কাক চোখটা

এত মানুষের ভিড়ের মধ্যেও যে খোঁজে বৃষ্টির একটা ফোঁটা।

এমনি আমার শহর।

আমার আবেগের অনুভূতির শহর।

কিন্তু এত ব্যস্ততার মধ্যে অনুভূতি অনুভব করার সময় কোথায়?

কিন্তু আছে তো বটেই।

ঠিক যেমন কবি বলেছে "রাতের সব তারাই আছে, দিনে আলোর গভীরে"

Emotions of a Poem

Debangana Chakrabarti, UG Media, 2nd Year

What am I, if you ask?

You see I'm not much of a task!

I am those feelings inside your soul,
Emotions that might be darker than coal.

The sunshine that casts you light
Words that make your day bright.

That which might bring a smile to your face
Or mark guilt when you find that trace.

Shed some tears,

And remove all your fears.

Your worries stay with you only,
You can help yourself more than anybody.

Sentiments might be quite revealing,
Don't take it to your heart, am just saying.

You play with me, with my words indeed
At the end of the day, you do succeed.

You scribble on me with your pen,

Writing about you and other men.

Or else you choose to type me down

Making me feel great through your words as a
crown.

When everyone else leaves you,

I will be there as your only crew.

Slipping the last glass of wine,

I feel so good to call you mine.



Five common mistakes that you should avoid during Email Marketing Campaign

Email is effective only when it is cleverly written. The prior objective is to understand its purpose & its goals. Digital clients have busy schedules and inboxes. Therefore in order to make an impression, we must ensure that the information we pass on is short, convincing, precise and most importantly presentable.

We do receive newsletters and automatically generated e-mails in our inboxes on a daily basis. Some of them do live up to our expectations while we tend to ignore the rest. In fact the ones that meet the eye are not only visually attractive but are also knowledgeable with authentic, precise and interesting content. It is important to understand the perception of a customer before sending emails to subscribers.

Marketing e-mails can be classified into two broad categories; Engagement e-mails and Transactional e-mails. E-mail marketing completely drives its focus on marketing a commercial message to a group of individuals.

It also involves developing successful marketing strategies. With the advent and rise in digital media, the cyber era offers plenty of resources to craft our communication strategies. Even with the wide array of successful marketing techniques available over the internet, mistakes and errors are still

made; they don't usually include the blatantly misspelt words or misplaced graphics that feature the wrong promotion. They are 'little' and sometimes 'big' mistakes that are easy to overlook but cost you email opens and click-throughs. Let us look into five of these common mistakes that you should avoid while sending emails to your clients.

1: Don't overhype your subject line

The common mistake that e-mail marketers tend to make is overhypeing the subject line. The brand trust factor is an important element and overhypeing your subject line would lead to your association being spammed.

In that case, it is certain that this activity would lead to disrupting the brand trust and that would affect your company's goodwill.

Various analytical studies have concluded that when a consumer is intrigued by the subject line and the hyperlink attached with the email contains insufficient information or content which does not relate to the subject, the consumer's psychological approach towards the email changes or should we say drastically declines for that matter.

Therefore it is to be kept in mind that the subject line must be precise, relatable to the content and should be written using only lower case letters.

2: Focus on the customer, not the product

It should be kept in mind that the purpose of an e-mail is to serve the customer and not the product/service that your company provides. Getting short-sighted and overlooking the demands of your client would put your company's reputation at stake. In order to serve your client, it is important to repeat the services that your company provides but that should be a solution to the problem and it should be more than what your client expects of you.

That would certainly raise the brand trust, so much so that if the necessary demands are met then you might even be rewarded with the client sharing about your company's profile over social media. That would lead to a silent promotion. Do provide authentic links that link to your association's digital content. But make sure the links are not broken.

3: User-friendly/Responsive design

Most of the E-mail Marketing Campaigns are designed for all devices on which users can read their emails such as desktops, tablets, smartphones etc. E-mail campaigns designed for smartphones and tablets get more priority as studies show that 67% of emails are viewed or read via these de-

VICES. This quality is known as "responsive design".

4: Be yourself

One of the biggest email marketing mistakes is not to be yourself while you are communicating with your client. Your client might develop boredom from reading your responses, therefore instead of being an e-mail marketing bot trying to sell something, let your personality shine. Being yourself might create a noteworthy difference and spark your way through all obstacles. Your client's interest level may rise with the way you deal things. Individual differences do matter.

5: Use adequate images to support your content

It would not be wise to use all images in the entire email. Not all users optimize their device with image content. It should also be kept in mind to use adequate images to support your content. Understanding your customer is an important way to be an efficient marketer. It helps you analyse the priority levels and also the demands. Your email should fill your client with sufficient textual and graphical content. It shouldn't be too long either.

Indranil Banerjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

Lines on a chosen aspect of the country

Considering the condition of women in our country, being a responsible citizen and a woman who is conscious of the violence revolving around a women's life, I would like to emphasize the rape culture that our country is struggling with. Rape is the fourth most common crime against women in India.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2013 annual report, 24,923 rape cases were reported across India in 2012. The mention of the year 2012 sends a shiver up and down my spine- with 'Jyoti', the entire country bled on that fatal day. Every year movies are made on women's safety women's rights, but the percentage that gets positively affected is very low.

They watch it for entertainment purposes and digest it with their regular thali and excrete it in the usual process. Nothing remains inside. From Jyoti to Asifa, what did they do to deserve such excruciating death? Rape is an acute pesticide of our country that no pest control can really vandalize. Enlisting some of the points that are responsible for the rampant rape cases that are being reported, some are not reported but the causes are similar.

Lack of sex education- In our country utterance of the word 'sex' is considered offensive and engaging into it is far more outrageous until and un-

less you have that redlining in your forehead. There is no sex education, but porn is available for free. The proper utility of sexual intercourse is never clear to an individual right from their childhood. Some think that it is something to shy away from, something which they are not supposed to discuss with parents and to be performed rather stealthily.

As a result, the notion of healthy sex never reaches children, and they grow up to believe that sex is something to have fun. India has the highest rate of population growth in the world; one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS infection; and a shockingly high rate of sexual abuse amongst children and adults - men and women. The leading cause: reluctance to educate our youth about their bodies, their urges, and the meaning and importance of safe sexual practices. Children at a very early age must be taught how to control their body urges and what is the difference between consensus and in consensus sexual intercourse.

The portrayal of women: Marital rapes are extremely common in our country. India has a huge

amount of rural population where girls are objectified. Right after 14 or 15, they are forced to marry even before they realize what sexual intercourse is. Lack of literacy rate, the portrayal of women in their household and family, the dominance of patriarchal chauvinism are some of the reasons for marital rape and other forms of rapes. Having talked about



the rural population, urban population is no good not get mentioned. In urban population also there are people who objectify women. There are females of urban culture that are victims of physical violence and molestations.

Failure of law: Every rape case is a failure of our constitutional laws that states everyone has equal rights. Every rape case where convicts are not hanged immediately after they are proven guilty showcase the loopholes of our system. Until and unless there are some strict and rigid laws against rape and physical acts of violence, nothing is going to change. The number of heinous crimes against women will continue to escalate if strict laws are not made immediately.

Blaming women's clothing: There are 1,00,000 more Soma Chakroborty who blame women's attire for rape. Our political figures are different than her, who believe and have quoted publicly that it is a women's fault for getting raped. They are no different than Mukesh Singh, Delhi gang-rape convict who has stated in a documentary that the victims must stay quiet while getting raped, that a girl of a reputed family shouldn't roam around in the streets- they should manage household work. I wonder how do these butchers justify the rapes of two-year-old and four-year-old.

These are some of the reasons that deserve a mention. Be it a man or a woman, violence is not acceptable. Rapes are not acceptable- anything about you that is without your permission is not acceptable. No matter how many times we trend '#nomoansno', until and unless we really implement this saying, nothing is going to change. No matter how much progress our country achieves in terms of economy, science, foreign policies and in other aspects, as long as your mothers and sisters are not protected, will there be a difference?

The famous quote reminds 'a woman brought you into this world, so you have no right to disrespect one

Saptadyuti Kar, PG Media, 2nd Year

Politics and Criminalization

Remembering an episode from childhood, watching Tom and Jerry show- when the remote was snatched and channel switched. The screen turned into a bloodbath with the criminals hurling bombs to scare away the voters in some election booth. Being naïve, unable to comprehend, somehow the word 'rigging' etched in my memory and remained with me ever since. Only today, I fully understand what the word means and it's ugly consequences.

During the first General Elections in 1951, no one with a criminal background was either given nomination or got elected. Politics was then dominated exclusively by middle-class as well as by the Rajas and other elites.

The scenario started to change from the '70s, with criminal infiltration in politics. Various socio-political movements started to take shape throughout the country. The reliance on people that they would support their agenda gave way to coercion and threat. Greed, force, fraud had then gradually entered the system. Hence, the rank-and-file of every political party got tainted as crime infiltrated the echelons of powers and started dictating terms.

Today we are no longer talking of the politics-crime nexus. The crime in many cases has become politics. It is no longer the henchman of any political boss-it has become the boss. The general perception today is that Indian politics is a fen of dirty water. Only germs can breed there. Nothing good can survive in this dirty world.

Fortunately, the Indian judiciary has taken cognizance of this increasing and alarming criminalization of Indian politics. The Supreme Court had passed an order that debarbs politicians from participating in politics if he is convicted in any criminal case. This order has certainly made the Raja Bhaiyas and Pappu Yadavs of Indian Politics a little apprehensive.

Another silver lining was found in the reaction of civil society against the legitimization of corruption and criminalization in Indian politics. In today's date, there are several movements and bills that are passed against this corruption that has gained tremendous public support. Perhaps the corrupt politicians have read into this movement the disgust of the ordinary Indians against them. Perhaps they have learnt to be afraid of the common man.

At last, what we can do is to take heart from these movements and sincerely hope that through them our country would get the appropriate weapon to remove this menace from the face of Indian polity.

Subhashri Dutta, PG Media, 1st Year